This chapter discusses the process of criminal law. The focus is on the importance of the exercise of official discretion, on the criminal law in action, and on the role of bureaucracy in criminal law. There is also an outline of sentencing powers. Patterns of decision-making by criminal justice officials are one of four key pillars of criminal law and justice, along with criminal law principles, rules, and standards. We will see how these patterns are structured by crime management and bureaucratic-administrative techniques designed to reduce the number of contested trials and issues, and hence take pressure off the criminal justice system as a whole.
1. Criminal law process

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